

Toot your own horn;-)

- Realize that your students are your very best advocates. Be the best teacher you can be, offering activities that are relevant, interesting, challenging, fun. Make your classroom – and the language you teach – “cool”! Go the extra distance to sponsor a language club and hold lots of activities, perhaps organizing them around a cultural calendar. Serve food, have some contests with prizes! Take field trips or an excursion abroad, if possible. There is nothing better than “word of mouth “ PR via happy students.
- Educate your students about the value of the language and culture they are learning. In so doing, you are building their power to advocate. Have them create brochures, visit other classes, “instruct” the guidance counselors, write a letter of thanks to the school board and to their congressional representatives for making it possible for them to study this language. Administrators and legislators pay attention to students! (Why not invite them to visit your classroom and see firsthand the good things happening there? Show off!)
- Establish and maintain close contact with parents. Start with a letter at the beginning of the year, and follow up with “good work” postcards about the students, quick calls home to praise somebody’s work, a monthly newsletter highlighting class activities and student work.
- Keep administrators “in the loop” about your curriculum and activities. Talk up your classes with teaching colleagues also. Go out of your way to work with other teachers on co-curricular units, projects and activities, and support what they are teaching via your own language lessons.
- Use technology to highlight student work and class activities, creating videos, etc that can be displayed on a blog or wiki, or via a link to youtube. Create a Facebook page about your class; use Twitter to send out announcements and interesting bits of cultural trivia, or links to a good article or exercise. The OFLA technology committee has provided us with numerous ideas for integrating technology in our curriculum. Make use of them! Students might also create videos or podcasts that specifically advertise the benefits of studying the language you teach, and these could be used to reach others in your school community.
- Don’t forget – even with technology at your fingertips - the value of good, old-fashioned displays of student work in your classroom, the hallways, and display cases. Decorate your room to make it a friendly, inviting oasis of culture.

- Use the school and local media to highlight and promote your language activities. Don't wait for someone to come to you and offer. Boldly approach newspaper editors and others.
- Involve your students in epal , skype, and other possible language and cultural exchanges. Invite local native speakers and business people, if available, to talk to your classes.
- Show constant enthusiasm for teaching and learning the language you teach, even on those days where you feel too tired to move! Make sure that you are well connected within the profession, not only keeping your memberships current with OFLA, but with regional, national, and language specific organizations, too. Try expanding your Professional Learning network via Twitter and other such social media. It is very important to keep current with professional news and legislative actions of consequence.
- Keep a list of friends and program enthusiasts, and make it a policy to be thoroughly aware of your community and its resources so that you can call upon your ready-made "army of advocates" if needed.

Give yourself the chance to "strike" before it's too late! We need to ensure that people everywhere know what we are doing. We need to link hands with other advocates in all sorts of places, and it all begins in our own classrooms and with our own personal passion for what we are doing.